(b) the remedial steps taken/proposed to be taken in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Funding gap for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid Day Meal Scheme

377. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are facing a huge funding gap of Rs. 12,000 crores in implementing the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Mid Day Meal Scheme over the next five years, even though it would mop up an estimated Rs. 28,000 crores through the additional impost of the 2 per cent cess on all Central taxes for the purpose; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take to bridge the gap and to ensure that SSA programme is implemented with full vigour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) The issue of future requirements of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) programmes will be examined by the Planning Commission as part of its Mid-Term Appraisal exercise for the Tenth Five Year Plan. If the exercise reveals that the cess alone is insufficient to fully meet the needs of these programmes, additional resources may have to be found for them. It is noteworthy that external assistance to the tune of Rs. 4700 crores has already been mobilized for SSA for the period 2003-07.

(b) Extensive financial and other support is being provided to State Government to enable them to vigorously implement Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Opening of New Central Universities

378. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to open two new Central Universities in Manipur and the other at Allahabad by converting the existing State Universities; and

(b) if so, by when the exercise in this regard is likely to be completed and legislations on the subject to be introduced in Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Government in the Ministry of Human Resource Development has agreed in principle to a proposal for restoration of Central University status of the University of Allahabad and conversion of the Manipur University into a Central University. It is, however, not possible to indicate a definite time frame for introduction of the legislative proposals on the subject in the Parliament as the necessary procedural formalities in this regard are yet to be completed.

Opening of Navodaya/Kendriya Vidyalayas in Rajasthan and Punjab

379. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to open more Navodaya and Kendriya Vidyalayas in Rajasthan and Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, how Government intend to raise the standard of education of the children living in villages and small towns all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) Proposals to open new Kendriya Vidyalayas and Novodaya Vidyalayas in the country are under consideration.

Primary Education Programme

380. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the districts especially in Chhattisgarh where Government have introduced the District Primary Education Programme;

(b) whether Government propose to expand this programme in other poor and educationally backward districts; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) A list containing the name of the districts in which District Primary Education Programme